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## Potential problematic rhetorical style transfer from first language to foreign language: a case of Indonesian authors writing research article introductions in English

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### ABSTRACT

Rhetorical style transfer from first language to a foreign language can be serious problems in academic writing, such as research articles (RAs). This study is aimed at analyzing the rhetorical style of Indonesian RA introductions in multiple disciplines written by Indonesian authors and published in Indonesian research journals especially on the ways authors justify their research topic and research activity and suggesting potential problems if this style is used when writing RAs in English. Four hundred RAs written in Indonesian by Indonesian speakers were selected for this study from mostly university-based research journals. The analyses were conducted using a genre-based analysis method following a problem justifying project model by Safnil [2001. Rhetorical structure analyses of Indonesian research articles. An unpublished PhD diss., the Australian National University, Canberra Australia]. The results show that: (1) unlike English authors, Indonesian authors consider establishing shared background knowledge important in their RA introductions but not justifying their research project; (2) Indonesian authors justify their research topic by personal reasons and reviewing the current knowledge and practices and (3) while some use subjective and practical reasons to justify their research projects, many do not justify it at all. If Indonesian authors use this rhetorical style when writing RAs in English, this can cause the article to be rejected by international journals.

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### KEYWORDS

Research article; introduction section; rhetorical style transfer; establishing and occupying niches

## Introduction

The contribution of Indonesian researchers particularly in the form of publication in international journals is still far below those of neighboring countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, while from the number of academics and researchers, Indonesian is far above those countries (Ariwibowo 2008). Although the funding for various research activities allocated by the Indonesian government has improved significantly in the last few years, the number of Indonesian researchers who publish their research articles (RAs) in international journals has not increased significantly (Arsyad 2016). According

to Arsyad, writing a research article to be published in an accredited journal in Indonesian is not easy for the majority of Indonesian researchers and writing a scientific article in English to be published in a reputable international journal is of course much more challenging for them.

The most important section in a RA after an abstract in attracting readers to read the article is the introduction section; therefore, writers must write this section as convincingly and persuasively as possible in order to attract readers' attention to be willing to read the whole article (Swales and Najjar 1987; Safnil 2001). If readers (including journal editors and reviewers) find this section uninteresting or unimportant, they may stop reading the article or reject it for publication in a research journal. Similarly, Belcher (2009) states that the introduction section of an RA is aimed to 'provide enough information for the readers to be able to understand your argument and its stakes' (209). Swales and Feak (1994) also suggest that the introduction section of an RA has at least two main purposes: to argue for the importance of the article and to motivate readers to read it. However, according to Safnil (2001) authors from different fields of discipline although writing in the same language may write this section differently because of different research practices and style of academic writing.

In an RA introduction, authors first situate their treatment of the research topic or problem in previously published work and then point to a gap in previously published research (Swales 1990). Swales suggests that there are two important questions to be addressed by RA authors in their introduction section: (1) why the research topic or problem is important and/or interesting? and (2) why the research project or activity is important or necessary? Research topic and research project are two different aspects of a piece of research and addressed in the introduction section of an RA. According to Swales, the first question can be answered by stating that the research topic or problem is interesting, valid, liked, classic, or has been investigated by many other researchers or by showing knowledge or practice and phenomena related to the research topic or problem. However, the success of such persuasive appeal may depend on the writer's credibility in the eyes of the readers; the more credible the writers are, the more successful the persuasion is.

The second question is usually answered by first evaluating or pointing at the gap of information in previous relevant studies or current knowledge and then stating that the purpose of their study is to fill in the gap (Swales 1990). Swales further suggests that this can be addressed by four possible rhetorical ways: (1) disagreeing in some ways with the results of previous research and wanting to dispute or challenge it; (2) finding the results of the previous research lack validity and reliability; (3) wanting to answer a particular question arising from the previous research and (4) willing to look further at the development of a particular case. However, according to Swales, authors from different research conditions may express this rhetoric differently. In a competitive research condition or field where researchers face a tough competition for a research space, these claims are very important and determinant and in order to be successful in such a competition, giving 'high-level claims' is often important although this 'involves contradicting large bodies of the relevant literature' in order to challenge assumptions made by previous studies (117). Similarly, the rhetorical features of RA introductions in one language can be different from those in another language. So, if an author uses the rhetorical style acceptable in his/her first language when writing in a foreign language, this can be problematic

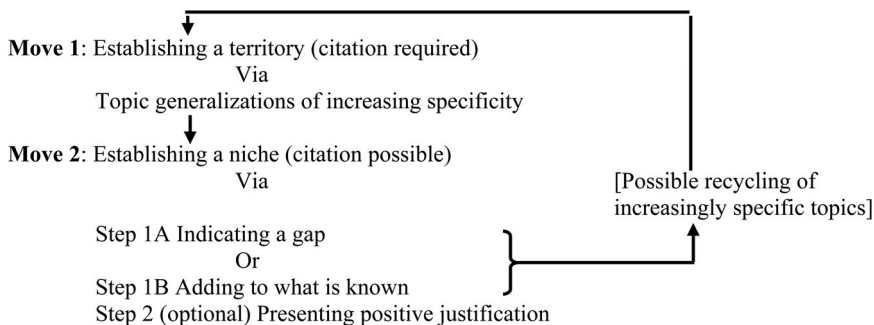
since the writing style does not meet the expectation of the foreign language speakers as far as the rhetorical style is concerned.

### *The rhetorical style of English RA introductions*

A model of rhetorical style of English RA introductions found in international journal articles for all disciplines called creating a research space (CARS) has been suggested by Swales (1990). In this model, RA authors address three communicative units with different communicative functions or purposes and each unit may have one or more smaller units with different communicative purposes. The communicative units are called 'Moves' which may have several possible smaller units called 'Steps'. This model has been used by many researchers to investigate possible rhetorical style of RA introductions in English in several different disciplines or in a language other than English with various inconsistent findings. Responding to these findings and suggestions, Swales (2004) revised his CaRS model, especially by modifying the steps in Move 2 (establishing a niche). This is, according to Swales, aimed at accommodating greater rhetorical style variations among RA introductions in different disciplines and languages. The new CaRS model is presented in Figure 1.

According to Swales, this new CaRS model is considered more flexible to accommodate various contexts of research environment although acknowledging that this model still needs further try out in various research fields and environments and various cultural and language backgrounds of the authors.

Unlike on English research articles, fewer studies have been conducted on the ways Indonesian writers organize their ideas or information in their Indonesian RA introductions. Among the few studies are from Safnil (2001), Mirahayuni (2002) and Adnan (2009). These genre-based studies are aimed at knowing how Indonesian authors justify their research topic and project in their RA introductions written in either Indonesian and/or English in several disciplines. Safnil (2001) investigated the rhetorical style of RA introductions written in Indonesian by Indonesian writers in economics, psychology and education and found that the discourse style of the RA introductions in the three disciplines in the corpus of his study was very different from those of the RA introductions in English as in the CaRS model (Swales 1990). The differences among other things, according to Safnil, are that (1) the introduction sections of RAs in Indonesian in the three disciplines have more moves and steps than the ones in English do; (2) Move 1 (establishing a

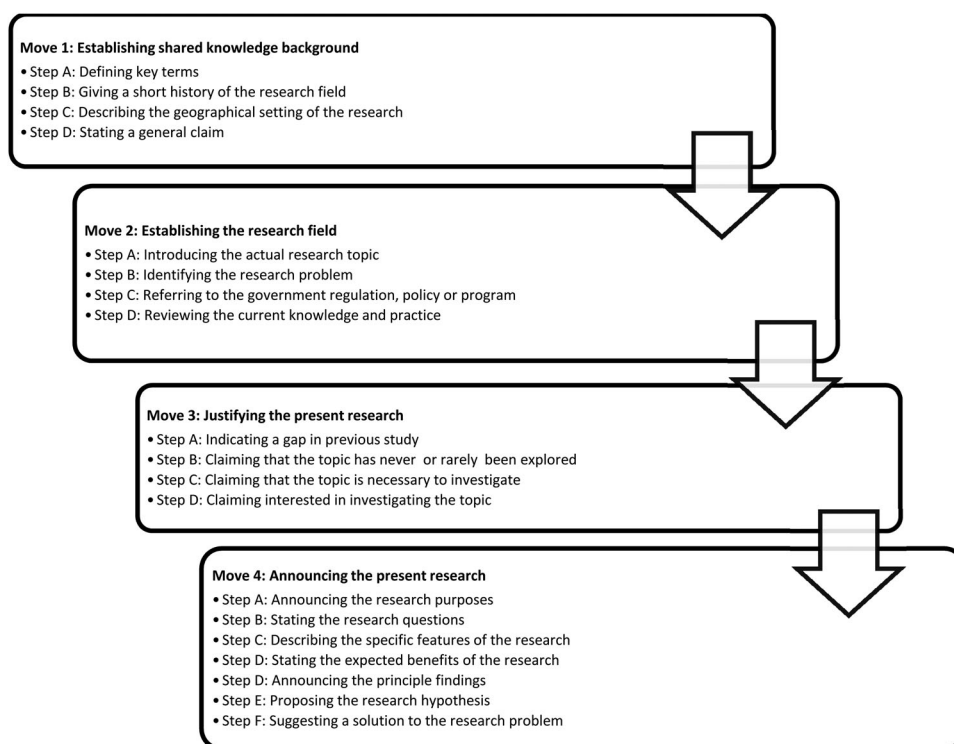


**Figure 1.** The revised CaRS model (quoted with permission from Swales 2004, 230).

territory) in the Indonesian RA introduction is mainly dealt with by referring to government policy to convince readers that the topic of the research is important; (3) Move 2 (establishing a niche), the most important move in the RA introduction because this is where authors argue for the importance of their research in the RA, is addressed by simply claiming that the topic or problem is necessary or interesting to investigate. In other words, the Indonesian RA writers do not justify their research projects or activities reported in their RA introductions as the ways English RA authors do.

Based on his findings, Safnil (2001) suggests a revised version of Swales' CaRS model in order to accommodate typical features of RA introduction in Indonesian written by Indonesian authors which he calls a problem justifying project (PJP) model. The four-move model is presented in Figure 2.

According to Safnil, the PJP model can capture more possible communicative units in the Indonesian RA introductions better than the CaRS does because it has more moves and steps. Safnil explained further that the PJP model can better accommodate the indirect rhetorical style of Indonesian RA introductions by introducing Move 1 (establishing shared background knowledge with readers) which is not available in CaRS. Research journals in Indonesia are often multi-disciplined; articles from several different but related fields are published in one journal. As a result, potential readers may not be familiar with articles which are not from their particular discipline and to help these readers understand the article, authors need to provide more information to help and attract them to comprehend the article. This is because, according to Rifai (1995), unlike in English RA



**Figure 2.** The PJP model for Indonesian RA introduction analysis.

introductions the purposes of introduction in Indonesian RAs are to provide the rational for the research project, to guide readers to read the whole article and to announce the contribution of the research results to solve practical problems in the society.

Responding to Safnil's findings, Adnan (2009) conducted a study on Indonesian RA introductions by analyzing the discourse style of RA introductions in education written by Indonesian speakers and published in accredited research journals in Indonesia. Adnan also used Swales' CaRS as a model in his analysis and found that out of 21 RA introductions in the corpus of his study, none of which matched the discourse style of English RA introductions. Adnan also found a rare occurrence of Move 1 (establishing a territory) in the Indonesian RA introductions and the majority of them prefer addressing the importance of their research topics by referring to practical problems experienced by common people or the government rather than by specific relevant discourse community. In addition, none of the Indonesian RA authors justifies their research projects or activities by pointing at the gap in the results or findings of previous relevant studies. In other words, unlike the English RA authors who prefer using rational and credibility appeals, the Indonesian authors tend to use affective appeals which may trigger an emotion that has personal relevance to the readers of Connor and Lauer (quoted in Purves 1988).

Unlike Safnil and Adnan, Mirahayuni (2002) conducted a comparative study on Indonesian and English RA introductions written by Indonesian and international authors. She analyzed the rhetorical style of introduction sections of three groups of RAs (20 RAs in English by international writers, 19 RAs in English by Indonesian authors and 19 Indonesian RAs by Indonesian authors) in the field of language teaching or applied linguistics. By using CaRS as a model in her analysis, Mirahayuni found significant differences between English RAs by international speakers and the ones by Indonesian authors. The differences are on the ways authors introduce and explain the importance of their research topics and research activity. According to Mirahayuni, to introduce and justify their research activities English authors refer to the knowledge and findings of previous relevant studies while Indonesian authors refer to more practical problems occurring in the community. In other words, for Indonesian authors research activities are intended to address more local problems and to be read by a small scope readership.

Studies by Safnil, Mirahayuni and Adnan are very important in order to know how Indonesian academics of a particular discipline or a group of disciplines rhetorically write RA introductions in Indonesian. This is because as Shi-xu (2005) claims, discourse studies of a language and/or culture other than English are often left out or forgotten while these studies are important to produce balanced information in the literature and objective perception of academic society members at large on these languages and cultures. However, the corpora in the above studies included only RAs of a particular discipline or a set of disciplines and none of them included RAs from multiple disciplines representing the ways Indonesian authors rhetorically organize ideas in their RA introductions. This is the main motivation for this study; in particular, it is aimed at investigating the argument style of Indonesian RA introductions written by Indonesian academics published in Indonesian research journals in social sciences, humanities, hard sciences, technology and medical sciences. The main questions addressed in this study are the followings:

- (a) How do Indonesian writers justify their research topics or problems reported in their Indonesian RA introductions published in Indonesian research journals?

- (b) How do Indonesian writers argue for the importance of their research project or activity reported in their Indonesian RA introductions published in Indonesian research journals? and
- (c) How do Indonesian RA introductions rhetorically differ or resemble among different disciplines and from those in English RA introductions?

To answer these questions, a genre-based analyses were conducted on Indonesian RA introductions published in Indonesian research journals in multiple disciplines (i.e. social sciences, language studies, literature studies, law science, hard sciences, technology, medical and health sciences).

## Methods

### *The corpus of this study*

Four hundred research articles written in Indonesian by Indonesian authors and published in Indonesian research journals were chosen for the corpus of this study; these are meant to represent Indonesian RA genre in the fields of social sciences and humanities, hard sciences and technology and medical sciences. The distribution of the journal disciplines and the number of RAs in each discipline is summarized in [Table 1](#).

Rhetorical analyses were done only on the introduction section of the RAs in the corpus of this study in order to answer the research questions.

In this study, a Move in the introduction section of the RAs following Nwogu (1997) is defined as

... a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic feature (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the context of discourse in it. Each move is taken to embody a number of constituent elements or slots which combine in identifiable ways to constitute information in the move. Moves and their constituent elements were determined partly by inferencing from context, but also by reference to linguistic clues in the discourse, ... (122)

As mentioned above, a move may have one or more smaller communicative units called a step to achieve its complex communicative purpose and using Safnil's (2001) definition a Step in this study is

... [a] segment of a text containing a particular form rhetorical work necessary for realizing the communicative purpose of a Move. Steps are strategies for encoding communicative

**Table 1.** The distribution of RAs in the corpus of this study.

No.	Discipline	Code	Number of RAs	%
1.	Social sciences	Ssc	50	12.5
2.	Language study	Lang	50	12.5
3.	Literature study	Lit	50	12.5
4.	Law science	Law	50	12.5
5.	Hard sciences	Sci	50	12.5
6.	Technology	Tech	50	12.5
7.	Medical sciences	Med	50	12.5
8.	Computer science	Com	50	12.5
Total			400	100



purposes. The steps are mostly signaled by linguistic and discourse clues in the text or are inferred from the context. (83)

According to Safnil, the decision on whether or not a segment in the text, such as a clause (s) or a paragraph(s), could be classified as a move or a step depended on whether or not the segment had a distinct and identifiable communicative purpose or function.

The PJP model of Indonesian RA introductions as suggested by Safnil (2001) was used as a guideline for the rhetorical analyses in this study because the research practices and research article writing practices in Indonesia have been found different from those in English as in the CaRS model (Safnil 2001; Mirahayuni 2002; Adnan 2009). In other words, it was believed that the PJP model could better capture more communicative units in the Indonesian RA introduction than the CaRS model did. Another reason for using PJP instead of CaRS as a model in the data analysis in this study was that the corpus for this study was similar to Safnil's (2001) study in terms of the language and the authors (Indonesian). However, a little modification was made to the original PJP model in which Step C of Move 1 (referring to the government policy) was moved to Step C of Move 2. This is because the rhetoric of 'referring to the government policy or program' can be considered as the writer's strategy to justify his/or research rather than to prepare readers' background knowledge. Since the majority of research activities in Indonesia are supported by government funding; therefore, a piece research must deal with the government policy or program. Thus, a particular research topic is considered important if the research results may help the government better understand and/or solve the possible practical problems in the community. The genre-based analysis on the RA introductions was focused only on the ways Indonesian authors justify their research topics (Move 2) and the ways they justify their research activity (Move 3) in their RA introductions.

The procedures of identifying moves and steps in the RA introduction sections were conducted following Dudley-Evans (1994). First, the title and sub-titles, the abstracts and key terms in the RAs were read to get a rough understanding of the content of the RAs. Second, the whole RA was read to divide it into the main sections of introduction, methods, results and discussion and conclusion. Third, the introduction section of each RA was read again to look for the available linguistic and discourse clues, such as conjunctions, specific lexicons and discourse markers. Fourth, the possible communicative units in the RA introduction were identified by using linguistic and discourse clues and by understanding and inferring from the text. Finally, the common discourse style of the RA introduction was identified particularly on the ways Indonesian RA authors justify their research topics and projects in their RA introductions. This study involved eight postgraduate students in Indonesian Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Bengkulu University investigating 50 RA introductions in 1 discipline.

Independent ratters involved in this study were eight postgraduate students at the Indonesian education department of teacher training and education faculty of Bengkulu University. First, the independent ratters were told how to identify the possible moves and steps in the texts with examples following the procedures described above. Then, they were given enough time to do the processes of identifying moves and steps of a sample of 50 (12.5%) randomly selected RA introductions from the corpus of this study. Inter-rater correlation analysis results show about 80% agreement; the inter-rater



disagreement appeared on the frequency occurrence of 'steps' of Move 2 and Move 3, while no disagreement occurred in identifying and categorizing the 'Moves' (Moves 1–4) in the RA introduction sections. The disagreements were then discussed further in order to look for an agreement before further analyses were conducted.

## Results and discussion

### Results

Data analysis results reveal that the main communicative units found in the introduction section of Indonesian RAs in multiple disciplines are as presented in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, the majority of Indonesian RA introductions in the corpus of this study have three moves: Move 1 (establishing shared background knowledge), Move 2 (establishing the research field) and Move 4 (announcing the present research), while only some of them (166% or 41.5%) have a Move 3 (justifying the present research). At least there are two important points to discuss here; first, for Indonesian writers establishing shared background knowledge or Move 1 is important in their RA introductions and second, justifying the research activity or Move 3 is not that important. An interesting point can be discussed here is the occurrence of Move 1 (establishing shared background knowledge) or the author's attempt to prepare readers in order to understand the topic of the article which include the act of defining key terms, giving a short history or the research field and describing the geographical setting of the research. According to Safnil (2001), the purpose of this rhetorical work is to introduce a particular research topic to readers who are new to or unfamiliar with the research field. The same rhetorical work was found by Ahmad (1997) when she analyzed RA introductions in Malaysian language published in English journals. According to Johns (1997), shared background knowledge (schemata) between readers and writers about the content as well as the form of a particular text is crucial for the success of text comprehension and processing.

Another important information from the data of this study as shown in Table 2 is that, only few Indonesian authors justified their research and this was done mainly by subjectively claiming that they were interested in conducting research on the topic or by claiming that the research topic was necessary to investigate. In English RA introductions, on the other hand, justifying a research project or activity was done by pointing at a gap found in the previous relevant studies or in current knowledge about a particular research topic (Swales 1990). According to Swales, this is usually done by negatively evaluating or critiquing the results of previous studies in order to create a space or gap to be filled by the present research. Thus, the aim of the study is to fill in the gap or space left out by previous studies and this is the main contribution of the study. In addition, as indicated

**Table 2.** The main communicative units in the Indonesian RA introductions.

The main communicative units	Journal disciplines									%
	Ssc	Lit	Lang	Law	Sci	Tech	Med	Com	Tot=400	
Move 1 (establishing shared background knowledge)	40	44	46	48	50	36	49	30	343	85.75
Move 2 (establishing the research field)	50	42	48	47	50	26	45	46	354	88.5
Move 3 (justifying the present research project)	16	23	20	25	28	18	14	22	166	41.5
Move 4 (announcing the present research)	41	35	36	28	36	36	45	32	289	72.25

in Table 2 the majority of the Indonesian RA authors in the corpus of this study do not justify their research project or activity at all.

The occurrence of Move 4 (announcing the present research), as can be noticed in Table 2, is quite frequent (289 out of 400 RAs or 72.25%) in the Indonesian RA introductions. The absence of Move 4 in some Indonesian RA introductions in the corpus of this study is because it is written outside the introduction section or in the methods section of the introduction. In the CaRS model, this move is identified as a Move 3 or ‘occupying the niche’ (Swales 1990, 141) because unlike in PJP, there are only three moves in the CaRS model. According to Swales, this move is written in descriptive rather than argumentative style because in this move the authors only introduce the specific features of their research article to potential readers. The data of this study also show that out of seven possible steps of Move 4 in the PJP model, Step G (announcing the principal findings) is rarely found in the Indonesian RA introductions. In English RA introductions, according to Swales (1990), this step is also rarely found; however, as Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) suggest, announcing the important findings of the research in the RA introductions tends to increase in order to promote ‘news value’ of an RA (33). Thus, if readers find that the findings of a piece of research reported in an article are interesting and important, readers may continue reading the article.

*Indonesian writers’ rhetorical style of establishing ‘niche’ in RA introductions*

The first question in this research as stated in the research question is how Indonesian writers in multiple disciplines convince readers that their research topics or problems reported in their research articles are important. The data analysis results are given in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of Indonesian RA writers tend to rhetorically justify their research topic using Step B (identifying the research problem) and Step D (reviewing the current knowledge and practices) although there are differences among the disciplines particularly on the occurrence of Step D between RAs in social sciences and humanities and those in hard sciences except in technology and computer science. As seen in Table 3, Indonesian writers in social sciences and humanities tend to use significantly more literature in their RA introductions than those in hard science, technology and medical science disciplines. This is probably because the rare literature in these two disciplines (technology and computer sciences) available to the writers; however, this has made the text less academic because the review of relevant literature becomes a very important element in a scientific or academic text such as essay, thesis, dissertation, research report

**Table 3.** The ways Indonesian writers justify their research topic in RA introductions.

Writer’s argument for their research topic	Journal disciplines									%
	Ssc	Lit	Lang	Law	Sci	Tech	Med	Com	Tot=400	
Step A(introducing the actual research topic)	30	45	19	26	45	8	37	17	227	56.75
Step B (identifying the research problem)	26	34	33	28	41	10	28	42	242	60.5
Step C(referring to the government policy)	15	10	5	33	6	10	12	5	101	25.25
Step D (reviewing the current knowledge and practices	41	40	41	33	45	13	45	5	263	65.75

and research articles (Hyland 1999; Kwan 2009; Kwan et.al. 2012; Soler-Monreal and Gil-Salmon 2011; Ridley 2012; and Onwuegbuzie et.al. 2012)

An interesting phenomenon can be noted here that 101 out of 400 or 25.25% authors justified their research topics by claiming that their research topics or problems are related in some ways to a government policy or program. Examples of such rhetorical work classified as Step C of Move 2 (referring to the government policy or program) taken from the corpus of this study are given below:

1. In Article 30 of the Constitution of 1945, it is stated that Indonesian is the language of the country. Furthermore, Indonesian is also referred to as the Indonesian national language, the language of the State administration, and established as the language of means of education. The use of Indonesian as a means of instruction in teaching and learning process at all levels of education is also stated in the National Education Act of 2003, Article 33 Paragraph 1 No. 20.
2. Seribu islands region based on the regulation of The Ministry of Indonesian Domestic Affairs and Regional Autonomy No. 13 of 2001 is included in Indonesian Capital Territory Province of Jakarta and specifically is under the district of North Jakarta.

In examples 1 and 2, the authors refer to the government policy or regulation in order to support the importance of their research topics. They try to convince readers that if a piece of research has some kind of connection with the government policy or program, then such research is important and necessary. This may sound strange by common readers especially of international journals in which a piece of research is necessary because it deals with government policies or program. However, in Indonesian research context since research funding mainly comes from the government, it is reasonable for writers to argue for the importance of the research topic from the government point of view (Safnil 2001). In other words, for Indonesia researchers convincing that a piece of research is important or necessary because it helps the government solve practical problems in the society and is used to win the research funding competition.

*Indonesian writers’ rhetorical style of occupying ‘niche’ in RA introductions*

The second question addressed in this study is how Indonesian RA writers convince readers that their research projects or activities are important or necessary. The analysis result is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The ways Indonesian writers justify their research project in RA introductions.

Writer’s argument for their research project	Journal disciplines									Tot=400	%
	Ssc	Lit	Lang	Law	Sci	Tech	Med	Com			
Step A (indicating gap in previous studies)	4	5	6	4	8	1	6	2	36		9
Step B (claiming that the topic has never been or rarely investigated)	3	4	4	–	5	–	2	1	19		4.75
Step C (claiming that the topic is necessary to investigate)	6	8	4	10	22	16	3	9	78		19.5
Step D (stating interested in investigating the topic)	3	6	6	11	3	1	7	–	37		9.25

Table 4 shows that the most dominant reason for Indonesian writers to conduct a piece of research is by claiming that the research topic is necessary to investigate. Below are examples of the rhetorical work classified as Step C (claiming that the topic is necessary to investigate) taken from the corpus of this study is given below.

1. However, in a larger scope the return of corruption assets is still not optimally handled; therefore, it is well worth the establishment of Asset Confiscation Institution. Based on the above description, the authors consider that this is an important issue to be investigated, that is the internal control department and its further action).
2. Based on the above background, it is necessary to conduct research on chloride mercury 'multigenity' by using melanogaster as an experimental animal).

The research justification, as in examples 3 and 4, may sound subjective or personal by international journal readers because these writers conduct a particular study only because they find it necessary or important not because there is some kind of knowledge gap in the literature as commonly found in English RA introductions. In addition, very few Indonesian writers (only 36 out of 400 or 9%) based their studies on the gap found in previous relevant studies as it is commonly found in English RA introductions. One of the reasons is that Indonesian writers tend not to critique or negatively evaluate other writers in their academic texts. According to Keraf (1992), critiquing other people is considered culturally impolite especially toward those who are older and from higher social and economic status although considering that this is not an ideal attitude especially when writing an academic text because the main purpose of academic text is to find and express the truth which involves evaluating what others have mentioned in their texts. The same comment has also been made by Adnan (2014) suggesting that avoiding critiquing others in academic text is still considered a national good value by Indonesian writers in hard sciences as well as social sciences and humanities because negatively evaluating other writer's work can result in disharmonized relationship.

A similar opinion was addressed by Soeparno et al. (1987) when they claimed that Indonesia is in a process of change towards urban and industrial society and academic society are at the front line of the evolutionary change. According to Soeparno et al., traditional subjective thinking style, such as easily trusting and relying on what other people claim without considering the need for further consideration or evaluation, still persists. However, as Soeparno et al. suggest, this type of thinking style is no longer acceptable in scientific practices because it is scientists' obligation to investigate and testify the truthfulness of whatever has been said or claimed by other people to tell readers in their academic writing.

The above claims are in line with those of ethnographers, such as Saville-Troike (1982) and Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988), who claim that, unlike Western cultures, Eastern people such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese and probably Indonesian consider group harmony and collective value more important; they even prefer keeping silence over criticizing other people. Indonesian academic writers seem to adopt the same style when writing academic articles; that is, avoiding to criticize or pointing at weaknesses of the work of other people in order not to appear face-threatening or to be considered impolite or in order to keep the group's harmony. In addition, Shi-xu (2014, 45) claims that, '[in] Asia, discourse can be harmony-oriented through effective linguistic expressions ...'. Thus, the

absence of critique or negative evaluation on other people's works in the introduction section of Indonesian RAs is due to cultural reasons rather than academic reasons.

A very unusual rhetorical work to justify a research activity is also found in the corpus of this study in which 37 out of 400 or 9.25% authors justify their research by simply saying that this author/s are interested in investigating the topic. Below are examples of rhetorical work classifies as Step D (Stating interested in investigating the topic).

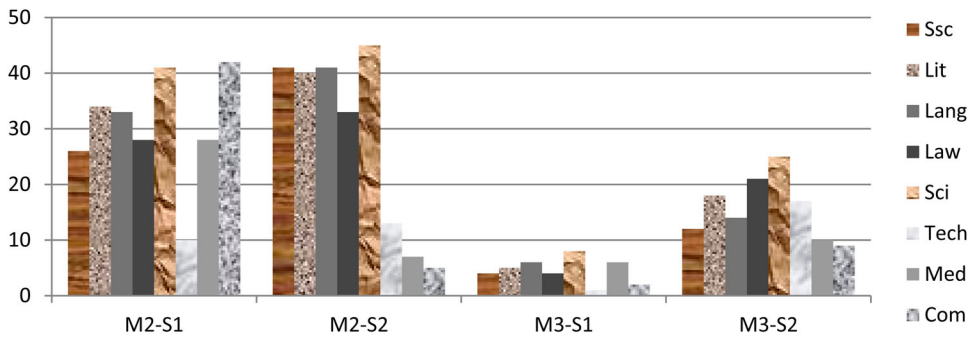
1. In order to analyze the effectiveness of efforts to combat crime of human trafficking in the city of Bengkulu, researchers are interested in further investigating this topic.
2. The people of Naga village still have a very strong custom including the use of plants in traditional medicine; thus, a case study on the use of plants as traditional medicine in Naga village is very interesting and necessary to do.

In examples 5 and 6, the writer stated that he/she was interested in investigating the topic in order to know further the effectiveness of crime combating efforts in Bengkulu city. Here, the writer did not refer to what other researchers had claimed, done or achieved in order to be continued or improved. The research activity conducted with this justification cannot be expected to contribute to the available literature and is possible to duplicate previous studies because other writers may have written or conducted research on the same or similar topic. According to Adnan (2014), research activities in Indonesia particularly in humanities are aimed at implementing new knowledge or theory in practice or solving particular practical problems rather than advancing knowledge at an international level. Thus, such study is conducted in order to find effective solutions for already described problems and therefore writers do not need to connect their research with previous relevant studies.

### *Comparison on the RA introductions rhetoric across the disciplines*

The last question addressed in this study is how Indonesian RA introductions rhetorically differ or resemble among different disciplines and with those of English RA introductions. To simplify the analysis, the steps in Move 2 have been re-categorized into two and called strategy: Strategy 1 or M2-S1 (personal reasons for the research topic) and Strategy 2 or M2-S2 (reviewing the current knowledge and practices), while the steps in Move 3 have been simplified into: Strategy 1 or M3-S1 (objective reasons for the research) and Strategy 2 or M3-S2 (subjective reasons for the research activity). The difference and similarity among the disciplines are shown in Figure 3.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the majority of Indonesian RA writers justified their research topic using personal reasons (M2-S1) except in technology RAs and reviewing the current knowledge and practices (M2-S2) except in technology, medical and health and computer science RAs. RA authors in technology, medical and health and computer sciences used significantly fewer references in their introduction than those in other disciplines. This is probably because the relevant literature in these three disciplines is hard to find (Posteguillo 1999) or because the available literature is only printed in English while the authors' English ability is still poor. However, this finding is different from the one from Adnan (2014) who found that more Indonesian RA introductions in medical and health science discipline used similar strategies in justifying their research topics to English RA



**Figure 3.** The differences and similarities among RAs in different groups of disciplines.

writers. Therefore, according to Adnan, Indonesian writers in these disciplines need less effort in modifying their RA introductions when publishing their RAs in an international journal especially in justifying their research topics. The different finding can be because the different quality of RAs selected for the two different studies; in Adnan (2014), only RAs from nationally accredited journals were included while for this study RAs from non-accredited journals were also analyzed.

Figure 3 also shows that very few Indonesian writers in all disciplines used an objective reason to justify their research; some of them used subjective reasons while many of them do not justify their research at all. This is the major difference between RA introductions in Indonesian and those in English. According to Swales (1990 and 2004), the English RA writers commonly justify their research objectively by showing that there is a knowledge gap in the literature and the purpose of the study is to fill in the gap. The Indonesian writers, on the other hand, tend to use research problem to justify their research project or activity. According to Safnil (2001), the existence of a practical problem on a particular important topic is already considered a reasonable justification for a piece of research and the purpose of the research is to find the best solution to overcome the problem. This finding is also different from the one by Adnan (2014) that the majority (81%) of Indonesian RA writers in medical science in his corpus used a required Strategy 2 (adding to what is known) in justifying their research. Swales (2004) claims that 'adding to what is known' is a common strategy used by international writers to support the importance of their research. However, in the data of this study, the Indonesian writers in medical sciences are similar to the writers of other disciplines in which the majority of them do not base their research on a gap of knowledge found in the literature and therefore their research findings may not add to what is already known by the discourse community in the disciplines.

## Conclusion and suggestion

### Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. First, for Indonesian writers establishing shared background knowledge is still considered important in their RA introductions and justifying the present research is not that important. Second, the majority of

Indonesian RA writers in multiple disciplines justify their research topics by personal reasons and reviewing the current knowledge and practices although with a different quantity of references used. Finally, very few Indonesian RA writers in all disciplines use an objective reason for their research while the majority of them used subjective reasons or do not justify their research at all. This shows that the rhetorical styles of the Indonesian RA introductions in multiple disciplines are very different from those in English RA introduction as suggested by Swales (1990, 2004). Readers from languages other than Indonesian must accept that this is a common style acceptable in Indonesian RA introductions; however, if Indonesian authors use this rhetorical style when writing an RA in English to be published in an international journal, it will be problematic and may cause the RA to be rejected.

### Suggestion

An important suggestion needs to be addressed here that Indonesian RA writers must modify their RA introduction rhetorical styles especially in justifying their research topic or problem and research project or activity when writing in English and willing to publish an article in a reputable international journal. This is aimed at improving the possibility of the article to be accepted in a targeted international journal. Thus, adapting to the rhetorical style commonly found in international journals is an important strategy for the Indonesian RA writers in order to improve the rate of acceptance of their journal articles in an international journal.

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